

DEC 17 1968

CPYRIGHT

M - 238,776

S - 668,941

CPYRIGHT

# Nixon Decides to Keep Helms as CIA Chief

By CHARLES W. BAILEY  
Chief of the Minneapolis Tribune  
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, D.C. —  
President-elect Richard Nixon, in an action that could



Helms

Agency (CIA).

Helms, a career officer who has headed the government's principal intelligence-gathering and secret operations agency since mid-1966, has been asked to remain "indefinitely," a Nixon spokesman said.

(NIXON MAY Sit Out Effort to Ratify Nuclear Treaty —Page 30.)

The incoming president took a similar—but shorter-term — step in announcing that he would retain J. Edgar Hoover as head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In Hoover's case, however, the reappointment apparently will be for only about a year.

ALTHOUGH NO limit to Hoover's tenure was specified, it was reported that Nixon expects Hoover to retire before the end of 1969. Hoover will be 75 Jan. 1, 1970.

Nixon's action in retaining Helms, who is 55, was considered significant for two reasons:

It represents a decision by Nixon to stay with a career intelligence "professional" as CIA director rather than bringing a new figure in from outside.

Helms is the first career man to hold the top CIA job,

and he has won considerable kudos here for keeping the often - controversial agency out of the limelight into which it was thrust by some earlier much-publicized mid-adventures.

Continuation of Helms' supervision presumably will mean a continuation of the CIA's considerable role in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries.

In Vietnam many of the U.S. "pacification" and other nonmilitary programs, as well as some of the more effective secret paramilitary operations, have been conceived, directed, financed and staffed by CIA.

A number of the top U.S. officials in Vietnam have been CIA men, who by and large have spent more time there and gained more sophisticated knowledge of the country than most other American civilian or military personnel.

THE INTELLIGENCE estimates produced for the president by CIA, based on reports from its agents in Vietnam, often have been less optimistic than the forecasts of the military and the State Department.

Helms is known to view his role as CIA director as that of a man who should never advocate policies, but who simply should report facts and judgments to the president.

This view led him into a conflict with some other high officials when CIA estimates of the Vietnam outlook after last year's big Communist offensive were sharply at odds with those expressed by some of President Johnson's key foreign-policy advisers.

NIXON'S DECISION to retain Helms suggests that he agrees with Helms, to whom he has talked several times since election, about the CIA role.

In any event he chose to retain the relatively anonymous intelligence "professional" rather than seek a new director with the flamboyance of Allen Dulles, the public repute of John McCone or the military connections of Adm. William Raborn — to name Helms' three most recent predecessors.

As for the Hoover pointment, Nixon decided that despite chief's age, he should keep him on as a symbol

NIXON'S EMPHA

ing his campaign on the problem of crime and his past statements praising Hoover could have made it awkward to remove him, despite the widely held view here that an early change is inevitable.

To keep Hoover on for another year, Nixon will have to sign a formal waiver of the standard requirement that any official over 70 must retire. Mr. Johnson initiated this waiver process for Hoover.

But few here doubted yesterday that Hoover, the only man ever to hold his job, will be retired within a year.